

MASONRY IN MANITOBA

Published by Authority of Grand Lodge

VOL. 4

JUNE 1948

No. 6

MASONIC PROGRESSION

The newly-advanced Fellow Craft, we earnestly recommend the study of the liberal Arts, as tending to polish and adorn the mind. Another name for these arts is "humanities," and a most interesting report comes from a convention of the Associated American Colleges, to the effect that literature by its nature has always been at the centre of liberal education, and that now, when society is passing through another crisis the study of literature has assumed a greater importance than ever. "Our Society," says this report, "is preoccupied with activities that obscure and deny the importance of knowing and understanding letters. This unhappy situation arises from technological promises of greater comfort, or from material rewards, or from dangers peculiar to the times that seem to demand immediate and material solution." Yet a vital factor in reaching solutions of problems is self-knowledge and the chief aid in attaining this is the annals of the men of all ages who have been confronted with human problems and conditions of life common to the race. Only literature can recite their rich and varied experiences, and moreover it presents these at a slower rate and holds them up for contemplation and understanding.

Masonry approves this method, and indeed inherited and passed it down from ancient times when education, the leading-out of the soul, was really understood. Granted that whereas the ancient schools only concerned themselves with the choicest candidates, and we have to deal with the masses, still there often come to the busiest men, periods of leisure when the faults of their school-life could be remedied, and a quiet voyage into the past undertaken. The desk of the Grand Librarian is an excellent ticket office and your voyage planned and entered upon, will light up again your mind as in youth, with the light that never was on sea or land.

(W.R.M. Seven Oaks Lodge)

LONG SPEECHES

We were amused to read in one of the daily newspapers recently an item which we are sure would appeal to some of our long-suffering audiences who frequent the banquet hall after Masonic meetings.

"Bet you didn't know that an electrical device designed to limit after-dinner speaking to ten minutes was installed in Kent, England. It consists of a large face with a protruding tongue, which when the speaker begins, starts moving. After eight minutes one of the eyes blinks a warning; and if the speaker overruns, the apparatus cuts the lights, giving the listeners a chance to sneak out without embarrassment."

MASONRY ABROAD

The continued influx of new members into our lodges and the anxiety of Masters to rush and hurry the candidates through the degrees at pell mell pace is familiar to every brother in Greater Winnipeg.

Recently a member of a lodge under the jurisdiction of Netherlands gave an interesting talk on Dutch Freemasonry from which we quote in part.

"To become a member of the Lodge the action is as follows: The candidate is recommended by a Master. During a period of eighteen months, he is examined very closely in all ways, by various brethren as well as by the Council of the Lodge. The Council gathers all the information concerning the candidate. This is done severely and accurately. His whole life period is scrutinized. When all this information is in accord with the aims of Masonry, the candidate is then inaugurated in the first degree.

When the ceremony is over, the candidate receives a pair of white gloves and his apron. He also receives a pair of white gloves for a lady. These are to be given only to the woman having his highest esteem. The brief repetition of the ceremony is held and the duties of the new brother read. When this is done the lodge is closed.

For a year, the new brother gets instructions nearly every week, and, after an examination, he gets his second degree.

Again, a year of instruction follows. The brother is again judged, and when the results are according to the aims of Masonry, then he becomes a Master Mason.

The first two degrees in Dutch Lodges are different from the English Lodges but the third degree is about the same as yours. This is briefly how the Dutch Lodges act.

From this brief account one can safely believe that in that part of the Continent of Europe the portals are well guarded.

WORDS WE USE IN MASONRY

There is no lack of support throughout the entire membership of Freemasonry when it comes to a suggestion that something or other is claimed to be an encroachment of "the ancient landmarks."

Throughout our long history there has been no shortage of opinion as to what actually constitutes our landmarks. The subject is intensely interesting, the explanations and claims numerous but this thought leads us to another phase which is equally important. Perhaps more so because it deals with matters entering into our constant conversation around the lodge room and among brethren when they meet and discuss their lodge affairs.

Are we careless in the matter of Masonic nomenclature, the words and terms constantly in use or should we say mis-use?

Take for example the term "Blue Lodge." We can search our book of ceremonial from cover to cover for this everyday reference but no explanation, interpretation or use of the words will be found there.

Mackey tells us in his encyclopedia that it is "a Symbolic Lodge in which the first three degrees of Masonry are conferred, is so called from the color of its decorations."

Mackey wrote from the viewpoint of United States Freemasonry and the term undoubtedly was first coined by our brethren south of the line and presumably it was used to differentiate between Craft Freemasonry and the so called higher degrees.

When necessity requires us to speak of our lodge might we not with profit use the correct term and make use of "Craft Lodge" which is the proper name and much more appropriate than the commonplace "Blue Lodge."

There is another misnomer which some of our Grand Lodge officers have endeavored to correct for many years. We refer to the objectionable use of "Fourth Degree." How this term ever came into use is difficult to understand and at best it sounds almost like slang.

Surely no justification can be found even by the most imaginative brother. There is no similarity between our ceremonies in the lodge room and the usual program found in the refreshment chamber.

There are plenty of words in our vocabulary by which an appropriate designation for our time of refreshment might be selected and it is urged upon officers and members that we guard our lips against this modern trend to use colloquialisms when Masonry has its own language which ought to be used.

THE GREATEST OF THESE

We take our readers once more into the storehouse of Masonic knowledge and from one of the volumes of "British Masonic Miscellany" we send this great message.

"The guiding principles of Freemasonry in actual life are Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth."

St. Paul in the 13th chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians introduces the reader, perhaps unconsciously, into the very heart and soul of Freemasonry. Those remarkable verses have been fittingly described as the "Psalm of Love." It is indeed a chapter of beautiful poetic prose, in which St. Paul tells us that the one thing without which everything is valueless is love.

Love expresses itself in numerous forms amongst which may be named patience, kindness, generosity, humility, courtesy, unselfishness, good temper, guilelessness, sincerity. These spiritual qualities expressed in human relationships denote the activity of the true concept of love.

Some men are noted for their knowledge, some for their eloquence, some for their wealth, but Freemasonry does not measure men by these standards. It measures men by the presence or absence of love in their souls, love for one another and love for humanity. It seeks to develop a fraternity of great hearts.

A true Freemason is never knowingly guilty of rudeness, never selfish, never resentful, never glad when others go wrong, but is always eager to believe the best, always hopeful, always patient. He is generous, meek and modest, his hand is ever ready to lift the fallen, cheer the disheartened, help the widow and orphan, and give relief and comfort to those in distress. Hence, it will be seen that love is the dominating quality in applied Masonic teaching. It is a reflection of divine love in our dealings with our fellow men. Without love, the beautiful ceremonies of the Craft would be nothing more than empty idle words.

Love is above eloquence, above knowledge, and above wealth. No true sense of love can be expressed by men who cherish thoughts of envy, malice, resentment or ingratitude. If we are ever to have "Peace on earth" and "goodwill among men," it can only be by mutual love and by sharing each others' trust and confidence.

We ought to be proud of this great Fraternity, and grateful for the place with which we have been honoured in its fellowship and service. Our immediate duty as Freemasons therefore is to maintain its efficiency in principle and practice, and thereby raise Freemasonry to that exalted position in society it deserves.

The future of this great Fraternity is very largely in our hands, and it is our privilege to uphold the dignity and traditions of this wonderful Brotherhood.

(Joseph Johnston)

PLANNING YOUR PROGRAM

We devote a brief space in this issue to the incoming District Deputy Grand Masters, who, by the time these words appear in print will have been duly elected and installed into office.

Past experience brings to our personal recollection the expressed problems of other brethren who found themselves in this exalted office but who were somewhat distressed as they contemplated their duties and responsibilities.

True every brother elected to office is not gifted with a fluency of speech, others are dismayed when they think about the subject matter they want to discuss in the lodges of their district.

One thing in particular we advise, i.e. be yourself and act natural at all times. The routine matters falling under your supervision are never difficult and your own experience in ruling your lodge when Worshipful Master will be an excellent guide on such occasions.

Do not underestimate the value of our book of Constitutions. Make yourself familiar with those sections relating to lodges, membership, officers, and when questions are asked then you should be in a position to supply the necessary answers.

Remember there is a Masonic Library where books are available to every member of the craft in Manitoba. Advise the brethren in your district to avail of this source of Masonic knowledge, because we do need reading and thinking Masons. Perhaps you yourself might obtain valuable assistance from the shelves of the library and out of the information thus gained you will be able to pass it on to others as you travel around the District.

When confronted with difficulties do not hesitate to consult the officers of Grand Lodge, they will gladly give you helpful counsel if only you ask for it.

You have a big job to do and we feel sure you will meet the occasion and bring credit to the District who has honored you with election.

IN MEMORIAM

The official roster of Grand Lodge has suffered severe loss since our last issue was printed. Two stalwart brethren, leaders in the Craft for many years have taken their place in the Supreme Grand Lodge above and we are left to mourn their departure. Truly, God moves in a mysterious way.

On the evening of April 17th, as the shadows deepened, the soul of Most Worshipful Brother Harry Woods winged its way to the realms of immortal love.

Less than twenty-four hours later, our esteemed Grand Treasurer, Right Worshipful Brother Alex Burgess followed the same

course thus increasing the sorrow of the friends who wonder at the mystery of life.

It is fitting that we should make a brief reference to these two active officers who have spent many years in and done yeoman service for the brethren of the Grand Lodge of Manitoba.

Harry Woods had been ailing for some time and passed away in Grace Hospital in his 82nd year. He was active in the cause of Freemasonry since the day of his initiation in Madras, India, forty-eight years ago.

On taking up residence at Stony Mountain he associated himself with Stonewall Lodge No. 12, later he assisted in the formation of Stony Mountain Lodge No. 134. In both lodges he had presided as Worshipful Master. He was elected our Grand Master for 1936-37 and since October 1939 was librarian in charge of the Masonic Library.

In the jurisdiction of this Grand Lodge there are hundreds of our members who will happily recall the installation ceremonies of Grand Lodge officers so eloquently conducted by Harry Woods at each succeeding annual communication since 1938. No more will we hear that resonant, sincere voice charging the newly elected officers with their duties and responsibilities.

What a flood of memories will be recalled as we repeat in our hearts from time to time the name of Harry Woods.

Our late Grand Treasurer did not appear in the limelight of the Craft to the same extent as some other officers but month after month since the year 1932, Alex Burgess has supervised and directed the financial affairs of Grand Lodge.

Alex was a quiet, retiring fellow but sound of judgment and a keen and sincere Freemason. He had been slightly indisposed for some time but not one of his many friends had any suspicion that the end was near. He had rested quietly all day Sunday and in the evening when his wife went into his bedroom he was found with Bible in hand but had gone to meet the Grand Architect of the Universe.

We have indeed lost two devoted officers who have served us faithfully and well for many years. But, let not the sorrow of our hearts dim the spiritual vision. Though the tabernacle of clay has been destroyed the living memory of Harry Woods and Alex Burgess will continue to live in our hearts.

They are not beneath the earth, in the depths of their tombs; they do lie deep in our hearts where all that they were will continue to live and act. They see us, they understand us more than when they were with us. Let us keep a watch upon ourselves so that they witness no action and hear no words but such words and actions that shall be worthy of the memory of two loved and loving Freemasons.